

to sections 102 and 103 appear to have been reversed in the examiner's paragraphs 4,5,6,7 and 8. We understand however, that the examiner meant to reject claims 1, 2, 6, 10 and 11 as anticipated by McFiggans et al., and 1-5 and 10-11 as anticipated by Palma, claims 7-9 being rejected on the ground of obviousness, and proceed on that basis.

McFiggans et al. disclose a metering device which may have a mail opener (Fig. 8 and col. 10). We are unable to find in McFiggans, however, disclosure of a relationship between the cutter and the printing means. In fact, it appears that the postage printer and the cutter may be at different locations. We therefore submit that McFiggans does not anticipate any claim of this application.

The Palma Patent has been misinterpreted. It does not disclose a mail cutter. The saw blades are for the purpose of destroying the stamping device if it is tampered with. Item 94 is not a cam, but rather the second end of a locking pawl, which releases the score marking assembly 86 to destroy the integrity of the postage stamp imprinter, as described at the bottom of col. 3. Palma does not anticipate any claim of this application.

With respect to the obviousness rejections, Amakawa does not cure the deficiencies of Palma noted above. Therefore, the rejection of claims 7 - 9 are traversed.

We submit that the claims of this application are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully,



Charles W. Fallow
Reg. No. 28,946

Shoemaker and Mattare, Ltd.
2001 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 415-0810

November 8, 2002

1. (amended) A mail opener for use with a postage meter having printing means operable to print postal indicia on a mail piece, said mail opener comprising
a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and

drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the printing means is printing postal indicia.

2. (amended) A mail opener for use with a postage meter having a print head which is movable between an operative printing position and a service position where printing cannot be effected, said mail opener comprising

a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and

drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the print head is printing postal indicia, and

means for moving the cutting device into the retracted inoperative position when the print head moves into the printing position.

3. (amended) A mail opener for use with a postage meter having printing means operable to print postal indicia on a mail piece and a first mail feed guide, said mail opener comprising

a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting

device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and

drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the printing means is printing postal indicia, and

a second mail feed guide extending in alignment with said first mail feed, and said second mail feed guide being located to guide an edge of a mail piece in engagement with the cutting device when the cutting device is in the operative position and to prevent engagement of the cutting device by the mail piece when the cutting device is retracted into the inoperative position.

4. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 1, further comprising mechanical interlocking means operatively connected between the printing means and the cutting device.

5. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 4 wherein
the cutting device is carried by a movable member;
the interlocking means comprises a cam with which the movable member engages; and
operation of the cam causes movement of the cutting device between the operating position and the retracted inoperative position.

6. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting device is a rotatably driven rotary blade.

7. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 1, further comprising driven feed means operative to draw the mail pieces past the cutting device.

8. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 7, wherein the feed means comprises a driven feed roller and a pressure roller co-operating therewith.

9. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 7, further comprising means for adjusting the speed of the driven feed means.

10. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 2, wherein the drive means includes an electrical circuit responsive to movement of the print head carrier to operate the drive means to locate the cutting device in the retracted inoperative position in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing position.

11. (amended) A mail opener as claimed in claim 10, wherein
the postage meter includes radiation means for radiating a signal in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing position and
the electrical circuit is responsive to the radiated signal.

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. A mail opener for use with a postage meter [; said postage meter including] having printing means operable to print postal indicia on [amil] a mail piece [;], said mail opener comprising a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted [inoperative] inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces[;], and drive means [operable to displace] for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the printing means is [operable to print] printing postal indicia.

2. A mail opener [as claimed in claim 1 wherein the] for use with a postage meter [includes] having a print head which is movable between an operative printing position and a service position where printing cannot be effected [; the], said mail opener comprising a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being [operated by movement of] operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the print head [into the] is printing [position to move] postal indicia, and means for moving the cutting device into the retracted inoperative position when the print head moves into the printing position.

3. A mail opener [as claimed in claim 1 wherein the postage meter includes] for use with a postage meter having printing means operable to print postal indicia on a mail piece and a first mail feed guide [and], said mail opener [including] comprising a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to

open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the printing means is printing postal indicia, and a second mail feed guide extending in alignment with said first mail feed[,], and said second mail feed guide being located to guide an edge of a mail piece in engagement with the cutting device when the cutting device is in the [operative] operative position and to prevent engagement of the cutting device by the mail piece when the cutting device is retracted into the inoperative position.

4. A mail opener as claimed in claim 1 [wherein the drive means is operable by the postage meter by], further comprising mechanical interlocking means operatively connected between the printing means and the cutting device.

5. A mail opener as claimed in claim 4 wherein the cutting device is carried by a movable member; the interlocking means comprises a cam with which the movable member engages; and operation of the cam causes movement of the cutting device between the operating position and the retracted inoperative position.

6. A mail opener as claimed in [any] claim 1, wherein the cutting device is a rotatably driven rotary blade.

7. A mail opener as claimed in claim 1, further comprising driven feed means operative to draw the mail pieces past the cutting device.

8. A mail opener as claimed in claim [6] 7, wherein the feed means comprises a driven feed roller and a pressure roller co-operating therewith.

9. A mail opener as claimed in claim 7 [including speed adjustment means operable to adjust], further comprising means for adjusting the speed of the driven feed means.

10. A mail opener as claimed in claim 2, wherein the drive means includes an electrical circuit responsive to movement of the print head carrier to operate the drive means to locate the cutting [deice] device in the retracted inoperative position in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing [position] position.

11. A mail opener as claimed in claim 10, wherein the postage meter includes radiation means [to radiate] for radiating a signal in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing position and the electrical circuit is responsive to the radiated signal.



Version with markings to show changes made:

11

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A mail opener comprises a cutting device, ^{which is} ~~the cutting~~
~~device being~~ movable between an operating position and a
retracted position where it is inoperative. ^{The} position
5 of the cutting device ^{is} ~~being~~ controllable by a drive ^{device} ~~means~~
controlled by the postage meter. The arrangement is such
that a single post station can be provided for both
^{applying postage} ~~franking mail~~ and opening mail. ^{The} post station
incorporating ^{es} ~~ing~~ a safety measure to prevent newly franked
10 outgoing mail from being inadvertently opened or damaged
by the mail opener.

~~(figure 1)~~

15

20

25

30

35